

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 and 8 have been canceled.

Claim 6 has been amended. Support for this amendment can be found on page 7, lines 10-19 of the specification and page 11, Table 1 of the specification (see Examples 1, 2, and 3).

Upon entry of the amendment, claim 6 will be pending in the application.

The Examiner asserts that claims 1-4 and 8 are directed to an invention that is independent and distinct from the invention originally claimed.

Applicants have canceled claims 1-4 and 8. Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application directed to these claims.

Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Klemmensen et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,005,625 ("Klemmensen"), in view of Ajbani et al., U.S. Publication No. 2003/0004250 A1, U.S. Patent No. 6,721,311 (Ajbani").

The Examiner acknowledges that Klemmensen does not disclose a composition comprising an organized lamellar clay mineral. In order to supplement this deficiency in Klemmensen, the Examiner further relies upon Ajbani. However Ajbani does not disclose Applicants' claimed characteristics.

In particular, the object of the present invention is to provide an inner liner having an excellent resistance to permeation of the air and an improved resistance to durability at low temperatures, while Ajbani relates to a rubber product which is improved in the tensile strength, modulus, and elongation. Specifically, the object of Ajbani is to provide a light-weight rubber

composition suitable for producing a tire tread, which is clearly different from that of the present invention.

Additionally, Ajbani, as mentioned above, does not disclose Applicants' rubber composition having a brittle point at a temperature of -44.5°C or lower. Further, Ajbani disclose some clays being chemically modified by surfactants, but the amount thereof that is actually used is only 5 parts by weight (Example 9, Table II), which is outside the claimed range.

As discussed on page 7, lines 12-18 of the specification, when the amount of lamellar clay mineral is less than 5 parts by weight, there is a possibility that the effect of mixing the lamellar clay mineral is not sufficiently exhibited. Additionally, when the amount clay used is higher than the claimed range, the hardness increases and this can cause a decrease in resistance to cracks at low temperatures. Thus, the claimed range of lamellar clay mineral produces a rubber composition for inner liners that exhibits an excellent resistance to permeation of the air and improved durability at low temperatures.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to combine the teachings of Klemmensen and Ajbani. However, even if one of ordinary skill in the art would combine Klemmensen and Ajbani, Applicants' claimed invention would not be attained by combining the two references. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claimed invention would not be obvious over Klemmensen and Ajbani and Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the

Appln. No.: 10/511,326
Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116

Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

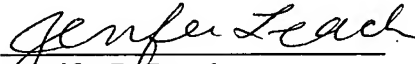
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